

Exodus 30-31 “Holy Worship”
Psalm 50
Revelation 7:1-8:5

July 23, 2017

On Sunday evening we’ve been working through the doctrine of the sacraments –
how the sacraments become effectual means of salvation,
not from any virtue in *them* (just going through the motions does not save you),
or in him that does administer them (it’s not the pastor or priest that saves you),
but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit
in them that by faith receive the sacraments.

God uses the sacraments to save us –
but you can only receive that salvation *by faith*.

That’s important for thinking about what God is doing through the sacrificial system
here in Exodus.

Because there were some in OT Israel who thought that the sacraments worked by themselves.
Our Psalm of response (Psalm 50) was written to counteract that view.

In Psalm 50 the LORD speaks to his people –
those who have gathered before him “by sacrifice” –
(the idea here is that trouble has come upon Israel,
and so they have come to inquire of the LORD, *why* is he angry with them?)
And God tells them that there is nothing wrong with their offerings and sacrifices –
some people seem to think that if you are having trouble,
it must be because you didn’t do the religious rituals right...
but God says, no, if you think that doing religious rituals properly is what I’m about,
then you have missed the point of all those religious rituals!

That’s why the second half of Psalm 50
addresses the wicked and says:

How can you take my covenant on your lips,
when those same lips speak evil –
you speak against your brother, you slander your own mother’s son –
you keep company with adulterers and you are pleased with a thief.

God says in Psalm 50 that if you think that you can just go on living your life the way you want,
and then bring a sacrifice to God to “make everything better,”
then God will not accept your sacrifices.

God does not need your sacrifices.

“If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.
Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?”

Yes, Israel is supposed to bring offerings and sacrifices to the temple –
but *not because God needs them!*

What God desires is *not* the flesh of bulls or the blood of goats!
What God desires is to dwell with his people.

Where all this is *going* is where the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us.
God is doing all this in order to make humanity a holy dwelling place.
The church *is* the holy temple – the holy dwelling place for God –
so that God can dwell with his people forever.

So let us sing Psalm 50.
Read Revelation 7:1-8:5

The golden censer of Revelation 8 is filled with incense –
together with the prayers of the saints.

John’s vision in the book of Revelation
spends most of its time around the heavenly throne – the heavenly altar.

In other words, he is in the heavenly Holy of Holies.
There is no curtain – there is no veil – in this temple,
because the veil has been removed in the resurrection of Christ.
Of course, prior to Christ’s resurrection,
the veil remained –
(that’s why no one in the OT *ever* goes up into the heavenly Holy of Holies).
At most, Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel only see the heavenlies
from the vantage point of earth.

But now John is standing in the heavens beholding the glory of the Lord face to face.
And all this is because of the Lamb who was slain.
He is the sin offering who was offered outside the camp.
He is the burnt offering who brings us near to God.
And he is the peace offering of whom we partake.

Therefore, Christ is the once-for-all sacrifice –
the one who brings all these things together in his own person.

Introduction: “The LORD Said to Moses” (25:1)

In Exodus 25-31, there are seven repetitions of “The LORD said to Moses”
As the LORD reveals the structure of the tabernacle,
there are seven sections – each prefaced with “The LORD said to Moses.”
The first was in Exodus 25:1.
The other six are in our passage.

1. The Place of Atonement: The Altar of Incense (30:1-10)

30 “You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. ² A cubit^[a] shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth. It shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³ You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and around its sides and its horns. And you shall make a molding of gold around it. ⁴ And you shall make two golden rings for it. Under its molding on two opposite sides of it you shall make them, and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. ⁵ You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. ⁶ And you

shall put it in front of the veil that is above the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is above the testimony, where I will meet with you. ⁷ And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it. Every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it, ⁸ and when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations.

So the altar of incense serves as a fitting *conclusion* to the description of the Tabernacle.

In Luke 1:10, when Zechariah goes in to burn incense in the temple,
we are told “when the time for the burning of incense came,
all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.”

Likewise Psalm 141:2 says, “May my prayer be set before you like incense;
may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.”

So the burning of incense was connected with the prayers of the saints –
a point that is made explicit in Revelation 5:8 – where the golden bowls of incense
are called “the prayers of the saints.”

Only a descendant of Aaron may burn incense in the temple.
Because only a descendant of Aaron can represent the people of God.

Every morning and every evening the priest was to burn incense before the LORD –
along with the morning and evening sacrifices.

⁹ *You shall not offer unauthorized incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering, and you shall not pour a drink offering on it.*

Verse 9 particularly warns against offering unauthorized incense –
or anything else, for that matter!

The golden altar of incense is *only for incense*.

The bronze altar – out in the courtyard –
is the place to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings.

So every morning and every evening Aaron will offer incense at the altar of incense in the Holy Place.

And then once a year:

¹⁰ *Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year. With the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it once in the year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.”*

Everything in the Tabernacle is connected.

On the Day of Atonement (described in more detail in Leviticus 16)
the High Priest would bring the blood of the sin offering into the Holy Place,
and would put a portion of the blood of the sin offering on the horns of the altar.

Why?

Well, the sin offering is offered to make atonement for sin.

In order for *anyone* to draw near to God, *sin* must be dealt with!
Sin separates us from God.

How can we draw near to God if our sin is not dealt with?!

The sin offering is offered – and the carcass of the animal is burnt outside the camp.
That’s why Jesus went outside the camp – he was crucified *outside the camp* –
the eternal Son of God became the sin offering –
and Hebrews 13 says that we, too, should go outside the camp,
bearing the reproach of Christ –
because we *know* that because God raised *Jesus* from the dead,
therefore, we also will be raised up in him!

But then on the Day of Atonement,
the priest would take some of the blood of the sin offering
and sprinkle it on the horns of the altar –
thus making atonement on the horns of the altar of incense.

The sin offering on the Day of Atonement was the most important offering of the year.
There were daily offerings – weekly offerings – monthly offerings –
and special offerings (like the Passover Lamb).
But the sin offering on the Day of Atonement
was the sin offering that covered *everything else* –
all the ‘other’ sins that had gotten missed throughout the year.
After all, if *sin* separates you from God
and somewhere along the way, there was some sin that you didn’t realize –
something that you should have done – but you failed to do!
Then that sin would prevent your prayers from ascending to God.

Remember the burnt offering?
The name of the burnt offering is actually the “going up” offering –
because the burnt offering is the way in which the people of God draw near –
“go up” into the presence of God.
The sin offering deals with sin –
so that the burnt offering can bring us near to God –
and then the worshipers would partake of the peace offering –
as we eat and drink with our God.

But all of that is done at the bronze altar in the courtyard.
The golden altar of incense – here in the Holy Place –
is now where the prayers of the saints are offered before God.
Now that sin is dealt with –
Now that we have drawn near to God –
Now that we have peace with God –
the prayers of the saints may rise up like sweet incense before the LORD.

That’s why the altar of incense is the *last thing* described in the first “And the LORD said to Moses.”

2. The Census Tax for Atonement Money for the Service of the Tent (30:11-16)

¹¹ *The LORD said to Moses,* ¹² *“When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for his life to the LORD when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them. ¹³ Each one who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel^[b] according to*

*the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs),^[c] half a shekel as an offering to the LORD.
14 Everyone who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the LORD's offering. 15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the LORD's offering to make atonement for your lives. 16 You shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the LORD, so as to make atonement for your lives."*

Verses 11-16 may seem a little strange.

When you take a census of the people, each must give a sizeable sum of money –
half a shekel was a significant amount.

The only reasons for taking a census in the ancient world
had to do with preparing for war – or imposing a tax.

But God says that you had better have a good reason for doing this!

The kings of the nations need to know how big their armies are!

But Israel does not need to worry about the size of the army –
because the LORD dwells in their midst.

We have seen that the LORD's tabernacle
resembles the war tent of Ramesses – the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Ramesses brags about the size of his army.

But Yahweh is the great King who has humbled Pharaoh and his army at the Red Sea!

Notice also that the ransom is the same for every man twenty years old and upward.

The rich and the poor – everyone pays the same amount.

After all, this is not a "tax" based on income or wealth.

This is a ransom based on the fact that you are a man.

It is "atonement money" – paid in ransom for your life.

And if it is *not* paid, then God warns that a plague may fall against Israel.

(In fact, this happens in the days of David, when David takes a census of the people).

3. The Bronze Basin for the Priests to Wash that They May Draw Near (30:17-21)

17 The LORD said to Moses, 18 "You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, 19 with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. 20 When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering^[d] to the LORD, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. 21 They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations."

Verses 17-21 then describe the basin of bronze for washing.

They washed with water when they were consecrated –
but then every time they go into the tent of meeting –
or when they come near the altar to minister –
they must wash their hands and their feet.

Think of what Jesus says to Peter, when Jesus is washing the disciples' feet.

Peter objects to Jesus washing his feet –

but Jesus says, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.”
And then Peter says, then wash my hands and my head as well!
But Jesus replies, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash,
except for his feet, but is completely clean...” (John 13:10)

Even as the priests have already been washed in their consecration –
and so only need their hands and feet to be washed –
so also Jesus’ disciples have been baptized into Christ.
Think about this in terms of the beginning of our worship service each week.

Have your sins been forgiven?

Yes, Jesus died for your sins –
and you have been united to Christ, buried with him by baptism into death.
So in that sense, you are completely clean.
And yet, we all come to church each Sunday with dirty feet.
We need Jesus to wash our feet –
just like the consecrated priests needed their feet washed
before they could walk on holy ground.

4. The Sacred Anointing Oil for Consecrating Priests (30:22-33)

²² *The LORD said to Moses,* ²³ *“Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, 250, and 250 of aromatic cane, ²⁴ and 500 of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin^[e] of olive oil. ²⁵ And you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. ²⁶ With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, ²⁷ and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, ²⁸ and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils and the basin and its stand. ²⁹ You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy. Whatever touches them will become holy. ³⁰ You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. ³¹ And you shall say to the people of Israel, ‘This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. ³² It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person, and you shall make no other like it in composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. ³³ Whoever compounds any like it or whoever puts any of it on an outsider shall be cut off from his people.’”*

Verses 22-33 then talk about the anointing oil that would be used for consecrating the priests.

It’s not just olive oil.

It’s olive oil, mixed with myrrh, cinnamon, cane, and cassia.

This would have a rich, sweet aroma –

and the LORD commands that this recipe only be used for the holy anointing oil.

This is the *smell* of holiness.

This is the anointing oil that would be on the priest and his garments –

so that this distinctive aroma would mark the priests as holy to the LORD.

But notice the effect of this holy anointing oil in verse 29:

“You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy.”

The next line is probably not the best translation:

The ESV says “whatever touches them will become holy.”

But you could also translate it,

“whatever touches them *must be holy*” –
and this fits better the context.

In the OT the *unclean* contaminates the clean –
the unholy contaminates the holy.

This is what makes Jesus so remarkable.

He touches the leper – and the leper becomes clean!

Think about it:

Jesus touches lepers and they become clean.

He even touches dead bodies – and they rise from the dead!

Such is the anointing upon Jesus that whatever he touches becomes clean!

When an unclean woman – a woman with a hemorrhage of blood – touches his garment,
she is immediately healed.

Such is the holiness of Jesus – the holiness of the Word who became flesh –

the holiness of the Son of God who was anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond measure –
so that whatever he touches becomes holy!

This is why we have such confidence as we walk through this age –

because we have received an anointing from Jesus.

We have been consecrated by his Spirit – so that we may walk in holiness.

1 John 2 talks about this in terms of how the anointing that we have received
teaches us so that we *know* the truth and *practice* righteousness.

And we smell another holy aroma in the holy incense (verses 34-38):

5. The Holy Incense for Burning in the Holy Place (30:34-38)

³⁴ *The LORD said to Moses, “Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part),* ³⁵ *and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy.* ³⁶ *You shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you. It shall be most holy for you.*

³⁷ *And the incense that you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves. It shall be for you holy to the LORD.* ³⁸ *Whoever makes any like it to use as perfume shall be cut off from his people.”*

This is what is to be burned on the golden altar of incense every morning and evening.

The prayers of the saints are a sweet aroma!

The acrid smoke of burning animal flesh is pleasing to God –

because it signals that a death has occurred to pay the penalty for sin.

But that is not the *last* smell –

death is never the last word –

so also the sweet smell of the incense is the last smell – and the *lasting* smell –

as it permeates the holy place!

All the senses are engaged in the worship of God.

Think about the way that smell would have functioned in the camp.

As you walk through the camp, you would smell all the smells of daily life:

the odors of the animals and their excrement –
the smoke of the campfires –
the bodily odors from all the people
(though you would *not* smell human excrement, since God required Israel
to bury human excrement –
since God himself *walks* among you!
And you don't want God stepping in it!)

In other words, daily life would be a pretty stinky place.

Then you would come to courtyard of the tabernacle –
where there would be blended together the stench of a slaughterhouse,
with the smell of roasting and boiling meat –
along with burning animal flesh –
in other words – the predominant smells would be the smells of *death*.

You may love the smell of roast beef –
but even the smell of meat cooking is the smell of *death*.
But as you pass through the courtyard –
as you pass the bronze altar for burnt offering –
you would draw near to the holy place –
and from behind its curtain you would catch a whiff
of the most beautiful scent –
the aroma of the sanctuary –
the incense burning on the golden altar of incense!

Beyond the stench of death is the fragrance of eternal life!

But also remember that the burning of incense is connected to the prayers of the saints.
When God says that we should *only* burn incense of a certain variety,
he is teaching us that “when we pray we ought to seek from the Lord
nothing other than that which he himself has commanded and promised to give us.”
(Bede, 137)

Don't just burn any old incense before the Lord.
When you pray, ask him for what he has commanded and promised to give us!

James tells us that the reason why we don't have what we pray for
is because we ask with the wrong motives –
because we want to fulfill our selfish pleasures.
We need to learn how to set our hearts on things above –
where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
We need to pay attention to what *God says* –
to seek first the kingdom of God and *his righteousness* –
but too often we are seeking first *my kingdom* and *my happiness*.

How do we do this?

Well, we need to learn how from Bezalel!

6. The Spirit-Filled Craftsmen: Bezalel and Oholiab (31:1-11)

31 The LORD said to Moses, ² “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, ⁴ to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, ⁵ in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. ⁶ And behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you: ⁷ the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, ⁸ the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, ⁹ and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, ¹⁰ and the finely worked garments, ¹¹ the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests, ¹¹ and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the Holy Place. According to all that I have commanded you, they shall do.”

Then in chapter 31,

in the sixth “the LORD said to Moses”,

the LORD identifies the two chief craftsmen – Bezalel and Oholiab.

It is probably not an accident that is the sixth statement.

Because it was on the sixth day that the LORD created man and blessed him.

And now in the sixth “The LORD said to Moses”

God says that he has filled Bezalel with his Spirit.

What does it mean to be “filled with the Spirit”?

One commentator says it well when he says,

“‘being filled with the Spirit’ is a biblical idiom for

‘having from God the ability to do or say exactly what God wants done or said.’”

(Stuart, 651).

When Paul says “do not be drunk with wine..., but be filled with the Spirit”

that is in the context of what he has just said:

“understand what the will of the Lord is”

And then he goes on to say:

“speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”

In other words, being filled with the Holy Spirit

means that you *know* what God wants –

you *say* what God wants –

and you *do* what God wants.

In the book of Acts, when people are filled with the Holy Spirit, they *speak* the word of the Lord.

Here, in Exodus, when Bezalel is filled with the Holy Spirit,

the Spirit gives him the ability, the intelligence, and the knowledge and skill

to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze –

so that he can be the master craftsman for the tabernacle.

It’s really important to note that this is *not* an ongoing *gift* of the Spirit.

This is something that happens only here –

for Bezalel here in Exodus for the building of the tabernacle.
After all, *what is going on here?!*

Why does a craftsman need the filling of the Holy Spirit in order to build the tabernacle?
Because the tabernacle is *not* just an ordinary tent!
The temple will not be an ordinary building!

The tabernacle reflects the heavenly dwelling of God.
Jesus says “destroy this temple, and I will rebuild it in three days” –
and he was referring to his body.
And *we* (the church) are being built together into a holy dwelling place for God.

Paul will say in 1 Corinthians 3:10
that “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder
[like the Spirit-filled Bezalel of old]
I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it.”
What is he building?
He explains that a few verses later:
“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in

you?

If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him.
For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” (3:16)

God filled Bezalel with the Holy Spirit so that Bezalel might build the tabernacle.
That is precisely what preachers now do today.
As Paul says in the same context (2:12)
“we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God,
that we might understand the things freely given us by God.
And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom
but taught by the Spirit,
interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”

7. “Above All” – Keep My Sabbaths (31:12-17)

¹² And the LORD said to Moses, ¹³ “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

So we see the Spirit-filled man in the *sixth* “And the LORD said to Moses.”
What do you suppose is found in the *seventh* “And the LORD said to Moses”?

Yup, this emphasis on the *seventh* day – the Sabbath day.
(In Hebrew the word “Sabbath” is the word meaning “seventh”)

Everything else in chapters 25-31 will have only tangential application to the rest of Israel.
It's all about Aaron and his sons – the tabernacle and the offerings and sacrifices.
Yes, all Israel is included *in Aaron* when he enters the Holy Place
wearing the ephod with the twelve stones –
bearing the judgment of Israel before the LORD.
But only the seventh “And the LORD said to Moses”
will have regular application in the day-to-day lives of Israel.

“Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths.”
The Sabbath is how ordinary Israelites are connected to the tabernacle.
No, ordinary Israelites may not enter the tabernacle –
they may not see the holy places or smell the holy smells.
But on the Sabbath they participate in the holy.

“For this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations,
that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.”

Even as the LORD your God sanctified the seventh day and made it holy,
so also you participate in that holiness when you work on the six days
and rest on the seventh day.

And I should mention that both parts of this are important:
we need to *work* on the six days!
As the LORD made the heavens and the earth in his six days,
so we are to engage in our regular labors for six days.

And then as the LORD rested on the seventh day and hallowed it –
so also he calls his people to rest on the seventh day.

And in Hebrews 4:9, we are told that “there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,
for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.”

Some people have tried to say that this refers to the eternal Sabbath rest –
and has no reference to Christians resting one day out of seven today.

But here's the problem:
Jesus says clearly in Matthew 12:8 and Luke 6:5 that he is Lord of the Sabbath.
And the Lord of the Sabbath never revoked the Sabbath!
By his resurrection, he demonstrates that the First Day of the week is the Lord's Day.
Indeed, Hebrews 4:8 says that there must be “another day” beyond the seventh day.
The pattern of the OT sabbath showed us that the cycles of work and rest
point beyond themselves to another day –
there must be a day when God will bring these cycles of work and rest to completion.

And that day is the 8th day – the first day of the new creation –
(which the OT already pointed to – but Jesus brings to fulfillment).

We are called to strive to enter that rest – that new creation rest – that sabbath rest.
In the same way that the church enters the heavenly tabernacle in Christ,
so also the church enters the eighth day – the Sabbath rest in Christ.

Conclusion: The Tablets of Stone (31:18)

¹⁸ *And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.*

And in conclusion, the LORD gave to Moses the two tablets of the testimony,
tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

The reason why there are two tablets is because there are two copies of the Ten Commandments:
one for each party to the covenant:
one for God – and one for Israel.
Both will be placed in the ark of the covenant –
because that is the place where God and Israel meet together.

We have now completed the basic story of how Israel came to Mt. Sinai and worshiped God –
as the LORD had promised.

It all started with the giving of the Ten Commandments in chapter 20 –
followed by the Book of the Covenant in chapters 20-23.
Then Israel worshiped God in chapter 24 –
and then God gave the pattern for continuing worship in chapters 25-31.

It is fitting that the Ten Commandments both open and close this section.
In Exodus 20, when God *spoke* all these words,
the people trembled – they could not bear the words that they heard.
Because in Exodus 20, there was no sacrifice – there was only *Law*.

And the Law without the Gospel is *not* good news!
But now here *after* giving Israel the way to approach him,
the giving of the Law is good news!

As we saw in Exodus 24, the book of the covenant without the blood of the covenant –
the *word* without the sacrifice – is powerless!
If God just *commanded* you to obey, but never sent Jesus to die for you –
we'd all be in trouble!
But God has given us *both* –
both the book of the covenant – the word of the Lord –
and the blood of the covenant – the sacrifice that deals with sin.
And indeed, they both come together in Jesus –
the *Word* who became flesh and tabernacled among us –
so that he might become the sacrifice who deals with sin,
who brings us to God,
and who feeds us with himself,
so that we might have everlasting life!